

February 4, 2010

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Paul E. Stacey, Director
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Planning & Standards Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, Connecticut, 06106-5127

RE: Draft Streamflow Regulations

Dear Mr. Stacey,

I am pleased to submit these comments on Draft regulations RCSA sections 26-141b-1 to 26-141b-9 on behalf of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA). CFPA is the oldest nonprofit conservation organization in Connecticut and has a mission of "connecting people to the land to conserve Connecticut." Although our primary focus is on terrestrial matters (hiking trails, forest management, farmland preservation, protecting state parks, etc.), we have a history of conservation partnerships with organizations such as the Farmington River Watershed Association, Housatonic Valley Association, and many others. Furthermore, we certainly recognize that wise natural resource conservation is an ongoing priority for our organization and should be one for the state of Connecticut.

We understand the regulations are required through passage of Senate Bill 1294 in 2005, and we applaud the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for putting forward a thoughtful regulatory framework that includes all rivers and streams. It is not perfect, and we share some of the concerns about Class IV rivers that have been raised by several others submitting comments, but we believe it is a strong start and merits further consideration during the regulation-drafting process.

We strongly agree with the assertion by Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, The Nature Conservancy, and several other conservation organizations that we support "a water management approach which provides clean, safe and sustainable water for our communities, our economy and our environment." At the same time, we also understand there will be costs associated with implementing these regulations. We would support appropriations, bonding, and/or other cost-sharing mechanisms from the state that would assist municipal and private water utilities in upgrading their infrastructure as may be necessary under final adopted regulations.

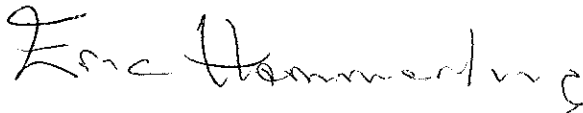
Without giving specific citations, we would like to recognize that there are several elements of the draft regulations that we appreciate in the name of good public policy:

- ☒ There is recognition that rivers are not the same and should have different management regimes based upon various ecological, historic use, and other site-specific factors;
- ☒ There is helpful guidance for what priorities should be during droughts; and
- ☒ There is some flexibility in how the regulatory requirements can be met over time (whether or not one agrees on the length of the timeframe for implementation).

On behalf of CFPA and over 2,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, I thank you for the opportunity to comment and for doing the hard work to bring forward these proposed regulations! Since it has taken many years and great effort for things to evolve to this point, we encourage the department to move forward with formalizing these regulations as rapidly as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact me via ehammerling@ctwoodlands.org or at 860.346-2372.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Eric Hammerling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Hammerling, Executive Director
Connecticut Forest and Park Association